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Financial Planning with Parents of Placed Children

DANIEL R. ELLIOTT, *Assistant Executive Director*

Children's Services, Cleveland, Ohio

CHILDREN'S agencies are being asked increasingly for help with placement of their children by parents who are able to pay for this service in part or in whole. The payment of such a fee has been found to have such meaning to the parents and to the children that it must be treated as part of the total case work process.

This applies to case work in private and public agencies alike, although the public agency generally cares for the long time dependent children where parental resources are more limited.

This article deals briefly with the concepts of financial planning including the meaning of payment for care to the parent, child, and case worker, as well as with the actual practice. Included is a description of centralized financial planning with parents designed to overcome some of the prevailing obstacles in achieving the objectives of case work with parents.

Evolution of Financial Planning with Parents

Up to the early thirties very little, if any, emphasis was placed on the responsibility of parents for participation in meeting the cost of care for placement outside of their own home. Social services traditionally had been established for the underprivileged, so that for years agencies had actually refused to consider to give service to applicants who obviously could pay and were eager to do so. Case workers' activities were therefore naturally focused in other directions. There was a lack of interest in this aspect of the job.

Between 1935 and 1940 there was a growing awareness of the importance of financial planning with parents as a part of a well-integrated case work program, as well as a source of additional income for financing the agency's service. From 1940 to the present, as unemployment has disappeared, agencies

have been called upon by budget committees and boards of directors to explain why there are children placed whose parents are not contributing toward the cost of care for their children.

Our realistic approach to this aspect of planning undoubtedly has some relation to the development of the public assistance program, and has sharpened our attitudes toward basic family needs. We are also more conscious of the value of parents' participation in cost of care as in the other aspects of case work planning.

It is recognized that there is some danger in separating one segment of the total case work process for examination without relating it to other aspects of the job. However, the individual case worker must have a clear conception of how she will apply the existing policies of the agency regarding the parents' responsibility for the support of children to the individual family. This is a very real and significant factor to both parents and the case worker as well as to the child. It must be handled consistently and with confidence, so that each parent will feel he is being treated impartially.

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Some time ago Dorothy Hutchinson made an interesting statement on the meaning of money which is worth repeating at this time.

"Money is a civilized and sophisticated tool of modern life. It is the key to a large measure of freedom, an assurance of power, a worldly evidence of how much you are worth and, to a certain degree, a factor in how much your strivings are gratified. Having it does not assure happiness nor lack of it, misery,—nevertheless, its possession or lack of it always has a very intimate and personal significance. It is ironical that for those who have it the more remote and insignificant money can be. For the poor it becomes the day-by-day battleground of existence and the crucial test of survival."*

We have had to face the fact that in the field of child placement there has been great inconsistency in handling of financial problems. The various phases we have passed through in relation to the need and purpose of child placement readily accounts for that. It has not been simplified by the conflict that is set up in attempting to distinguish between placement that is needed because of basic dependency, as compared to care which is indicated as a possible protection to the future welfare of the child. We have all had cases from time to time where we would have fully enjoyed telling the parent to take his child home if he didn't want to pay, and yet we know the best thing for the child is continued placement. Our situation is not nearly as simple as that of a collector for a loan company who can repossess the goods and file civil suit if the customer doesn't pay.

The situation has been further complicated by our increased understanding of human behavior and an awareness of the underlying factors contributing toward the parents' reluctance to assume the responsibility for financial support of his child. However, these facts do not relieve us of the need to perfect our methods of consistent handling of financial planning with parents.

Meaning of Payments to Parents

The meaning of payments to the parents is significant and important in the total placement plan. Leon Richman has said,

"By focusing attention on the realistic aspects of placement, the worker can be helpful to the parents from the point of intake and throughout the contact. One such area concerns itself with the question of money. The handling of money is not a distinct and separate process, but is an integral part of the case work activity with parents. It has to be carried out with the same psychological consciousness and with the same case work principles as are applied in other areas of case work. Money represents one of the reality limits within the agency structure around which the client

and worker can become engaged in the placement situation. The parent can test out his real desire of the specific help the agency provides, and the case worker gains an understanding of the parent and the need he is attempting to express."†

Unless the matter of payment for the child's care is skillfully handled, the parent may build up a tremendous amount of feeling because of the frustration or guilt that develops over paying someone for the care of his child. It is not nearly as simple as making payments for furniture or medical care, although it is usually placed in the same category.

Recently I heard a parent verbalize very clearly his feelings about paying full cost of care for his children. He claimed he couldn't pay the amount even though an analysis of his earnings and expenses showed that by careful planning he could afford to meet the payment. He rebelled against the so-called "logical method" used in pointing up his ability to pay. He said the proposed plan for payment did not allow for the little things he wanted to take to the children to make them happy. Further discussion revealed the things were not so "little." He was buying large toys, expensive articles of clothing, candy, and non-essential articles. It was pointed out that he could give less expensive gifts to the children, but he refused to accept this suggestion. It was evident that this was to him a means of competing for the affections of his youngsters which he thought he was losing, and it was also his way of showing the children that he was a much better parent than the mother from whom he was divorced. His attitude reflected both frustration and guilt over placement, which was focused on payment and required skillful handling to relieve his feelings, and which helped him to operate on a less competitive, more realistic basis, and also obtain support for the child.

There are also parents who fundamentally reject the idea of payment to an agency, and it takes considerable patience to overcome this rejection. We have also all seen the parent who uses payment as self-punishment. This is often found in the case of unmarried mothers. We have to guard against the parent paying more than she is able, since this is a symptom of an emotional condition which is more difficult to treat when such unrealistic payments serve to intensify the condition.

Meaning of Payments to the Child

We must not overlook the effect of board payments on the child. This serves as a means through which he can express his whole attitude toward separation

* Case Work Implications in the Use of Money in Child Placing —The Family, July, 1940, Page 150.

† Social Service Review, September, 1941, Page 485.

from his parents and the placement situation. It seems very odd to some children that their parents can afford to pay for their care, but yet cannot provide a home for them. There are also the children who take advantage of the fact that their parents pay for them and use this method of showing their hostility toward the foster parents or the institution. The handling of money questions provides a means of getting at some of the fundamental attitudes influencing the child's behavior. The worker can utilize this factor to get at what the child thinks about what has happened to him, his bitterness toward the agency, and his disappointment in his parents.

Meaning of Payments to the Case Worker

The third point of focus in board payments is the case worker herself. In the article previously mentioned Dorothy Hutchinson goes on to say,

"For the case worker herself the experience of money in the child placing agency is frequently one of her less attractive responsibilities and one she secretly hopes to skip over. She doesn't like relief and may even have consciously chosen the field of children's work because surely there would be less of it here. If money were just a medium of exchange, her life would be easy; if it were just a question of giving money, that would be possible, but here she is in a field where she frequently has to get money from parents. If they do not pay the child's board, maybe the agency cannot keep the child. Sometimes she is caught between the administration pushing her and the client who derisively manages not to be able to pay.

"Most parents who come to a children's agency are more or less neurotic people with a large measure of rejection for their children. The case worker in the children's field is unable to help children unless she believes they are good. She is constantly exposed to a series of parents who do not believe this and her temptations to resentment, punishment, and anger are manifold. She is frequently and inherently drawn into the midst of a pathological parent-child relationship, a symptomatic part of which may be expressed through discussion of the parents' payment of board.

"It is imperative that the trained case worker in any field of social work know herself. She is here, more than in most fields of endeavor, exposed to the pressure of sick situations. The children's field as case work is a very personal field in that its content so frequently starts in motion the deeper areas of the worker's own life. Her cases are full of sex, hatred, punishment, jealousy, deceit, guilt, and unpaid bills. She, therefore, needs to be more than normal and to keep her own strivings from becoming involved. If she has hatred for the vindictive parent, she cannot help him. She will be unable to assist the parent she is afraid of, and she cannot help him to pay if she feels she has no rights here."*

Practices Concerned with Financial Planning

The rest of the article could be well spent on further exploration of the above-mentioned factors.

* The Family—July, 1940, page 158.

However, I would also like to point up, for consideration, the practices concerned with financial planning. Principles and policies mean little unless they are effectively administered, and very little emphasis has been given to this aspect of the job.

The multiplicity of duties comprising the worker's job in the field of child placement makes it necessary that she organize her work very carefully. The phase of financial planning with parents calls for detailed and exact handling because of the factors involved. This phase is often neglected and falls into the same category as case recording and dictation unless the case workers have a deep conviction about its importance to the child-parent relationship. There is delay in performance of these tasks because there are so many other duties to be performed which are supposedly more important.

A conscious effort is made by most workers to work out a satisfactory agreement for support, although there is apt to be variation in the amount decided upon depending on the worker's knowledge and attitude toward budgeting living expenses in relation to income. The difficulty usually develops in the subsequent follow-up involved with the parents in meeting their payments. To handle the work consistently requires regular examination of accounts to make sure payments are being met and, if not, then it is necessary to find out the reason. Pressure of other work and a dislike for this kind of checking usually interferes with regular follow-up.

Centralized Financial Planning with Parents

In order to overcome some of the above obstacles, Children's Services, in September, 1937, centralized financial planning with parents of placed children. The objective of the plan is to properly integrate sound principles of case work with the details of budgeting and follow-up work related to financial planning.

One staff member, a trained case worker, is given the responsibility of seeing that a suitable plan for the support of each placed child is worked out with the parents. The duties include an interview with the parents prior to the child's placement to determine the amount to be paid, and any subsequent follow-up work relating to payment as long as the child is placed.

It should be emphasized that the process is one of teamwork between the case worker and the financial planner. There is a conference between the two prior to the preliminary interview to determine what the

most practical plan should be with respect to support payments, taking due recognition of the reason for placement and attitude of the parents toward placement. The case worker outlines to the parents the agency's procedure regarding agreement for support, pointing out that the agreement is based on the parents' ability to pay and recognizing the responsibility for full payment of care. They are informed that the details are worked by the staff member in charge of financial planning.

During the preliminary interview the parent is informed by the financial planner that his responsibility is limited to the agreement for support and planning for placement of the child is carried out jointly by the parent and case worker.

There is a review of the full cost of care, including the boarding cost, clothing, medical care and agency service. If the parent states he can pay the full cost, the agreement is signed by the parent without any further questioning regarding employment, or income and expenses, unless there seems to be evidence of the parent's actual inability to pay the full cost. If the parent claims he cannot pay, there is a detailed review of the budget and the amount to be paid is arrived at jointly by the parent and staff worker. If nothing can be paid at the time of placement because of illness, unemployment, or excessive expenses, arrangements are made for follow-up interviews to determine any change in financial status. It is made clear to the parents that they should feel free at any time to discuss matters pertaining to financial planning. A summary is given to the case worker, pointing out any significant aspects of the interview.

Method of Checking Status of Account

There is regular follow-up on each account. If payment becomes five days overdue, a routine reminder is sent to the parent calling his attention to it and the worker is informed of the situation. If there is no response to the reminder within five days, a letter is sent asking the parent to communicate with the staff worker if there is some reason for non-payment, otherwise the payment will be expected as planned. This brings a response in almost all cases. However, if there still is no payment within another five days, the case worker is apprized of the situation and a joint decision is reached as to whether in the next letter reference should be made to court action for the collection of amounts in arrears on board and for obtaining a court order for continued board payment. The case worker is given an opportunity to see the

parents if she cares to, but the time element is emphasized. There is actually a very small proportion of cases that have to be referred to the court for disposition.

In cases referred to the agency for placement where there has been a court order for support, the staff worker is closely identified with the Child Support Department of the Court regarding financial planning and confers with the case worker on any major decisions. This is an advantage in that the court has contact with only one person, which accelerates planning and provides for uniformity in the relationship with the court. This results in more competent handling of the parents.

An effort is made to keep the voluntary agreement or court order in line with the parents' ability to pay, so that adjustments in the account may be necessary during the placement period. However, if there is an unpaid balance on the account at the end of the child's placement, the account is reviewed with the parent and arrangements are made for payment of the balance. There is close follow-up until it is paid. Workers are kept informed of payments and interviews in all cases.

Question has been raised regarding the validity of centralized financial planning with parents in that the case worker is deprived of an integral part of case work activity. It is important to emphasize that this plan is not a process separate and distinct from the case worker. It is one in which she is constantly alert to the parents' participation in financial planning, and delegates the detailed aspects of the work to the staff worker.

The advantages include uniform handling of a factor in child placement in which there might otherwise be considerable variation depending on the individual case worker's attitude toward money. The plan also centralizes responsibility for follow-up and collection, which, through thoughtful and careful handling, can result in increased income from parents.

The parents have a sense of satisfaction in knowing they have fulfilled their obligation in line with agency policy, and the community is impressed with the extent to which parents assume financial responsibility for the care of their children. It is becoming increasingly clear that one tangible method of measuring the effectiveness of the total case work program within an agency is the way in which that agency discharges its responsibility in the area of financial planning with parents.

A Community Changes Its Children's Institutions

DOROTHEA GILBERT, *Director*

Children's Service Bureau, Shreveport, Louisiana

FOLLOWING the traditional pattern, our two institutions for children, supported by only a small segment of the total community, had each given long-time custodial care, and had operated on the assumption that once a child came to them, they could assume all of the prerogatives of parents. Strictly speaking, our community had given little thought to its program of child care prior to 1935 when the newly organized Community Fund began to concern itself with services given by agencies. A cursory examination revealed that one of the institution boards had not met for eight years, that the kind of accounting given to their stewardship of public money was inadequate, and that the existing practices were seriously out of line with the kind of care provided for children by other communities of comparable size.

The Fund then made actual rotation of board membership a prerequisite for inclusion and required meetings of boards of trustees, and full reporting of income and costs became a requirement. Soon the boards of trustees of each of the institutions began to raise serious questions regarding the kind of care children were receiving.

This deepened concern for children culminated in an invitation by the Junior League and the Community Fund to the Child Welfare League of America to make a community-wide survey of the needs of dependent and neglected children of Shreveport. On the basis of the recommendations of this survey, the Children's Service Bureau was established to provide case work services to children and to be available to the established children's institutions, if they wished such service. In addition, it was accepted that the agency should offer foster home as well as institutional care. Since that time, a public agency to meet the needs for long-time placement of the dependent child, and a private agency to meet the needs of the more economically privileged parents in planning for their children during comparatively temporary periods of stress, were established. Both of these services were operated on the basic principle that children need to be with their own people but when placement is necessary the most adequate substitute for most children is foster family care.

One Institution Modifies Its Program

At the time the Children's Service Bureau was established one of the institutions asked the new

Bureau to concern itself with the children living in its orphanage and to take over responsibility for admission and discharge. To that end, it offered office space to the new Bureau. On examination it became clear to the staff and boards of the Bureau and the institution, that most of the children under care were not really in need of the long-time care that had been rather categorically provided them. With board support, within a period of four years, all but four of the children in the original group, who had been in the institution for an average period of eleven years, had been either returned to their own people or, in a few instances, were satisfactorily placed with foster families. In the meantime, enough children had come to the agency needing care away from their own homes to refill the institution, and the institution began to take on the pattern it now has, a fairly temporary home for youngsters who eventually can return to their own families.

An examination of the practices within the institution showed varying inadequacies so far as the day-by-day care went. There had been no medical program, no examination into the intellectual and emotional capacities of the children, no concern for the needs of children for their own possessions or for an understanding relationship to house parents, no attempt to help parents maintain responsibility, financial or otherwise. Although the institutional children had gone to the public school, the wearing of uniforms, the practice of marching the children directly to and from school, of excluding them from the group activities of the other children in the school and centering their life outside of school hours entirely on the work of maintaining the home, had set these children so completely apart from the community that they were ill-prepared for resumption of normal home life or of personal responsibility for themselves or their actions.

Merger of Bureau and One Institution

At the end of three years the boards of trustees of the Orphanage and the Children's Service Bureau recognized that in effect they were operating as a single agency and that the structure of two boards was extremely cumbersome. A merger was therefore effected, and the executive of the Bureau was placed as the supervisory head of the total organization with the institution a facility of the merged agency.

Despite the special service made available by the institution, there was a strong tendency to consider it a white elephant. The case working staff, which by that time had increased to three in number, felt quite guilty whenever they admitted a child to the institution. The general feeling at that time was that eventually there would be no justification for continuing any institution service though, for the time being, it provided shelter for children. Children were not admitted if a possible foster home could be found for them. There was no differentiation aside from the pressure of necessity to determine admission to the institution. At about this time the growing public department which had already gone far through its A.D.C. program in relieving the community of the necessity of providing care for children away from their own homes solely because of financial dependency, also instituted a foster home program for dependent children needing long-time care. This program was very small in the beginning so that the private agency continued to carry some responsibility for this group when the public agency was not able to meet all of the needs.

The Second Institution Joins the Merged Agency

The second institution in the community had used the services of the Children's Service Bureau only in a vague, advisory way. Neither the board nor the staff of the institution were ready to have outside people share in the lives of their children. The Bureau found that actually it did children little kindness by attempting to plan with or for them on such an unrelated basis. Board rotation set up by the Community Fund had resulted, however, in intense concern on the part of a new board regarding inadequacies of care that were evident. For a period of three or four years the board had become increasingly administrative. Members of the board were buying all food for the institution; in open board meeting they discussed the family situations and the behavior of individual youngsters; each board member had assigned children whom she dressed, took on trips and for whom she mediated when the child did not like a matron's decision. Because the board got to know and sometimes to like parents who brought their children, they employed some of the parents as members of the staff. This resulted in preferential treatment for certain children within the group. In spite of a great deal of effort and concern the children became increasingly difficult. The institution was designed for girls only and was composed very largely of older girls. The board attempted to control them by keeping them on the grounds of the institution

outside of school hours and locking them in at night. They were met with enormous bills for cut screens and growing community complaints. Shortly after the merger of the one institution and the Children's Bureau the board of this institution asked the agency to give supervision and case work service to the children and to take over the administrative supervision of the institution. The following year a trial merger was entered into and the year after that a complete corporate merger including all the properties of the two institutions and the Children's Bureau was effected. Within six months of that time this institution was closed with only four girls needing transfer to the other institution.

It is probably important to remember that the staff which worked with children and their families and shared their findings with the board started from a major premise that institutional care was not a very good way of caring for children. Yet as they continued to work with children in the institution, as well as children in foster homes, they began to feel that the institution had a specific something to offer some children during certain periods of readjustment that was better for them than foster care. Through the course of the past few years the institution has come to play a very specific role in the agency's program. So much so that we now believe that no matter how great the per capita cost we will always want to keep an institution as a necessary facility in a program of care for children away from their own home. There do need to be, however, certain definitiveness as to the nature of the group which the institutions can best serve. Experience here has indicated that:

1. Institutional life has little to offer pre-school children and in most instances is positively harmful even for short periods, because a small child is still in the stage of development where close personal dependency on a parent person is necessary for growth and development. Children of pre-school age are not ready for sustained, continuous group activity and find the confusions of full-time group life over-stimulating. It is far sounder to use a temporary foster home for the small child not ready for a permanent relationship with an adult.
2. The institutional setting offers certain troubled school age children a breathing space and a respite from having to pick up a parent-child relationship until such time as they are ready to reach out for this closeness. As one of a group sharing a common experience of being away from their own people a child may gain more easily an acceptance about the need to live away from home.
3. Protracted group living for children from high school age up and with girls more than boys is not too desirable. These older children usually suffer agonies of embarrassment over their atypical home life, particularly from the well-intentioned curiosity of their contemporaries. The positive values of the group experience may outweigh this negative side but their period in the group should not be prolonged beyond the time needed by the child to make a readjustment.

4. An institutional group should never be limited to the adolescent and pre-adolescent. No matter what the age grouping, the youngest child in an institutional group has a handicap for he needs an opportunity to go back from time to time to play activities and satisfaction of the age group he has just left. If the youngest is only six, he does not fare too badly for he is usually intent enough on his new going-to-school maturity that he can satisfy this other need by curling up on his house mother's lap now and then. Twelve or thirteen year olds, however, thrown only with their contemporaries or elders, have no natural way of returning to the stage of development they have so newly left for the life of the group tends to be dominated by the older children and the twelve-year-olds imitate their sophistication long before they are physically or emotionally ready for it. Twelve and thirteen year olds need to have opportunity to be children one minute and grownups the next.

5. Group living is much healthier if both boys and girls form the group. There are times when our most masculine boys will spend a whole morning playing with a toy cook stove and our most feminine girl occasionally enjoys a good commando raid. The crushes of adolescents are much easier to handle if boys and girls have a chance to get honestly angry at each other from time to time when their interests clash.

6. Too much variation in the mental capacities of the members of the group create real difficulties. Privileges and restrictions, to seem fair to children, need to be based on chronological age grouping. A twelve-year-old with a mental age of nine or ten, cannot safely be allowed the same freedom as a twelve-year old with his mentality up to his chronological age. The less able child needs to choose between group ridicule for play interests below his years or the imitation of play interests that are not yet really satisfying for him. He is very apt to be exploited rather unmercifully at times by his more able contemporaries. The child of superior abilities, on the other hand, can be thwarted and irritated beyond measure by the restrictions and activities of his chronological group and needs scope for the kind of adventurous experimentation that in fairness to the group he cannot be permitted. These are factors that should be taken into account in deciding whether to admit a child and also how long he should remain in the institution.

7. It is not possible to give good group care to children if part of the group is thought of as permanent institutional and part temporary. There are a few children (our experience so far has run to about one in fifty) who get much more from group living than they could ever accept in the closeness of a foster home situation. These children are given little opportunity for real security when they are kept in a group in which their friends are constantly shifting and where they have little opportunity for putting down permanent roots. Since the size of our community does not seem to justify an institution giving permanent care, it has seemed far better to return these children to their people and help them to find a permanent institution for them.

With the virtual stoppage during the last few years of applications from foster families, the institution is not the free-flowing channel we would like it to be. If there were enough foster homes available the average child would be ready to move on into the closer relationships of a foster home within five or six months. We estimate that with a community of our size, around 100,000 population, a receiving home for fifteen or twenty youngsters would probably serve

our needs. Such an institution needs to be planned and equipped to give this specialized service. The community as a whole needs to understand and support the program.

Relation Between Case Worker and House Mother

Although there are many real administrative disadvantages, problems to be worked out when the case work staff is so closely bound to an institution, the closeness of having the case work services housed in the institution building has necessitated a great deal of straight thinking about the respective roles of a house mother and a case worker, and the need for integration of the responsibilities with a unified approach to the child. A body of staff policies were developed in its weekly staff meetings that has strengthened the practice of both the institutional and case working staff. These are some of the basic considerations in the process of admitting children to the institution.

1. Applications for admission are accepted only from parents or guardians who come voluntarily asking for placement. Parents or legal guardians need to understand fully the nature of the care the agency will be giving and the terms under which the agency will board the child, namely, the kind of financial obligations parents will have and the privileges and restrictions the agency will exercise regarding visiting, gifts, telephoning, vacations, etc. Although these conditions will vary, depending upon the nature of the group, we believe that it is imperative that the house staff have reserved for it some of the fun of giving things that bring substitute parents and children close together and that the parent know that he is truly giving his child into the care of another person for a time.

2. If the parent reaches a decision to ask for placement based on full knowledge, the agency needs to give both the child and the family a period during which each of them face something of what will be involved in separation. There is great value in the child having a different worker from the one the parent knows and in having that worker take the child from his home and return him while the routines of physical examination, necessary shopping, etc., are carried through. In these visits the child can find out through the worker something of the place to which his parents are sending him and can gain some familiarity with the person who will continue to be close to him during his stay with the agency.

3. Both the child's house mother and the group as a whole need to be prepared for his coming and the case worker needs to work very closely with the house mother during this time so that she has fore knowledge of the kind of child he seems to be and of the kinds of qualities he will bring into her group. The house mother needs to plan thoughtfully for the location of the child's bed and locker and needs to know a good deal about the kind of routines and living to which he has been accustomed. No child should be brought into the institution until he is free from any communicable disease and ready to mingle freely with the other children.

4. Throughout the time a child is in the institution there needs to be continuous interchange between the case working staff with

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BULLETIN

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Henrietta L. Gordon, *Editor*

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Have You Counted the Children You Serve?

THE LEAGUE is giving careful attention to the subject of service reports but, pending the release of comprehensive finding, there is one simple suggestion which may prove practical in the laying of plans for 1946 including budgeting. It is important for you and for those who review your reports, both service and fiscal, to know how many children your agency has served within your most recent year, and how the number served compares with the similar total for the year 1940 or 1935.

In our tendency to shorten the average length of a child's care in a foster home or an institution it is important that service reports reflect temporary service and that it be contrasted statistically with the longer and sometimes less effective care which formerly characterized most of our work with dependent and neglected children. Failure of agencies to show this contrast has been observed in some of the Child Welfare League's recent studies.

An institution, recently visited, now has under care about 100 children, whereas five years ago it had nearly 140 children under care. But in the year just completed it served as many children as during the similar annual period in 1939. It obviously has reduced greatly the average length of stay in the institution, and probably in the interests of better service for the children concerned. Indeed it is only by better service, generally requiring a larger and more qualified staff, that such progress can be made. The surgeon who expedites his patient's recovery so that he remains in the hospital only half as long as was customary with the same operation five years ago may be compared to the social worker who similarly expedites, with sound service, a child's return from an institution to his own home. In such situations the vacant bed testifies to a more intelligent use of the hospital and the children's institution. Wherever foster family care may be reviewed through the dec-

ades there has been a general tendency to shorten the average length of stay, and in this respect there is little difference between institutions and foster homes, unless it be that some children properly should be transferred more promptly from institutions to foster homes.

Not all temporary care is efficacious, and whatever general trends may be, it is important to observe that some children do not remain long enough in institutions or foster homes to permit an effective use of these services, just as some patients are discharged too quickly from hospitals. Hasty or ill-considered discharge too often reflects a lack of good case work. Some children receiving foster care never should have left their families and there is a tremendous economy in the prevention of their admissions to an institution or foster home.

Temporary child care, however, can be expected to come into more common use in the postwar period, and again this applies to care both in institutions and foster homes. For some children such care may be essentially temporary, as in detention or shelter services, for others it may mark a new use of foster care facilities as when a brother-sister group, for which visiting housekeeper service is not available, require a few weeks of care while their mother is in a maternity hospital and picking up the tasks which a new baby brings. Then there is temporary care, a part of long-time planning, as for the study or observation of children with special problems, or as preparation for more permanent placement.

It is exceedingly important for governing boards and budget committees of agencies and community chests to realize that temporary care of suitable quality costs more than long-time care, not only in the more frequent adaptations it requires of foster parents or institutional workers, but in terms of more case work, clinical services, clothing costs, etc. There still are reasons for computing per capita costs in terms of the number of days care provided in a year or the average daily population under care. But such data take on new meaning when considered alongside the number of children under care during the month or year, which is most simply computed by adding to the number under care at the beginning of a period the number received for care during the period.

A small institution may do as much as a large one used to do, and we may learn that more important than knowing how many children are under care is the knowledge of how many have been under care within a given period, and the quality of the service they receive.

HOWARD W. HOPKIRK

Miss Boretz Completes a Big Job

MARY E. BORETZ, for twenty-seven years Director of the Foster Home Bureau, Jewish Child Care Association of New York, an affiliate of the New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, whose pioneer work and dynamic leadership in the field of foster home placement for dependent and neglected children has affected the lives of countless of the nation's children, will retire on December 31, 1945. Miss Boretz has been designated voluntary consultant to the trustees and executives of the Jewish Child Care Association of New York.

From the beginning of her association with the Foster Home Bureau, which was organized in 1905 as a department of the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society, Miss Boretz championed and won support for placing children in foster homes so they could live and grow up in the community "just like other kids." This was achieved in the face of opposition from community leaders who sponsored the institution type of care.

One of the stalwarts who helped to establish the Child Welfare League of America, Miss Boretz has contributed to the planning of various national and Federal services to children. She has the congratulations of the League, upon completion of a period of distinguished service to children. We will cherish her continuing counsel and activity in those areas of child welfare in which the country needs her contribution.

A Community Changes Its Children's Institutions

(Continued from page 7)

its purposive connection to the child's own family, and the house staff with its understanding of the shifting adjustment of the child.

5. Just as responsible foster family care involves a continuing of the meaningful relationship between the case worker and the child, so the child in the institution needs the help of a case worker in continuously re-defining his relationships to the agency and to his own family. And it is through an interchange between the institution and case working staff that children can find in the institutional experience the consistent security that can sustain them.

This kind of closeness in planning is one of the real advantages in having the institution an integral part of the agency. One problem is in the amount of time the staff needs to spend in keeping clear on its respective responsibilities so that the eternal question of children, "Who is the boss of me?" can be answered with definiteness. When an agency that also offers service to children in their own home is housed in the

institution building, there may be a disadvantage since the community thinks of it as the orphanage and parents who are not considering placement away from home for their children but who could use case work help in planning, do not find their way there.

Conclusions

Sometimes, with the long drought of foster homes this community has had, we wonder whether an institution geared to the care of children for whom only temporary separation from home is needed may not be a possible answer. If the private agency holds to its function of accepting only those children who have a meaningful tie to responsible parents and whose own families are located within the immediate area, institutional care may have real advantages over foster care for school age children. Guilty as the agency has felt about the length of time some of the children have stayed in the group it has been quite possible for the children to feel a reasonable amount of warmth and security and to still feel close to their own people. By and large parents visiting has not presented much strain.

The values that democratic group living has held for the children in this particular institution have been discussed in the Child Welfare League's recent publication "Self-Government in a Children's Institution."* Needless perhaps to say, the children's daily life and activities need continuous, careful and thoughtful planning.

The largest problem that the agency faces in operating its institution is in finding adequate staff willing to live the restricted personal life that is necessary if a child is to have a sense of a house mother of his own with the emotional balance, understanding and physical endurance necessary to meet the impact of a continually changing and emotionally confused group of youngsters. Just as it takes unique qualities for a person to be a temporary foster mother it takes these same qualities *plus* for a house mother in an institution for temporary care. We have not found the answers to these problems except as we have discovered the unique people who have potentialities for the job and as we have developed personnel practices that protect the house mother from being overburdened, it has meant real learning-on-the-job.

This community has not even yet found the final answer to the place of its institution but it has a real and defined place of its own at the moment, and one that is seen as of continuing value.

* Reviewed in this issue.

1946 Case Record Exhibit Committee

WE are glad to announce that Miss Marjorie W. Pitts, District Secretary of the Connecticut Children's Aid Society, has accepted the post of National Chairman of the new Case Record Exhibit Committee.

This is an early reporting to the member agencies that the National Committee to plan the 1946 Case Record Exhibit Committee has already met and formulated plans for the selection of the new exhibit. So much feeling has been expressed as to the value for agencies in calling staff meetings to discuss this project and to plan for active participation by staff members in the selection of records for the exhibit, that we hope that this early notice will make it possible for staff meetings to be held in all member agencies for the purpose of examining the case records and for determining which records the staff would select as representative of their best case work and best recording. Thus each agency staff would participate in a measure in the selection of records on a qualitative basis. Too often only the supervisor or the staff member who sits on the regional committee carries this responsibility. Moreover, early submission of records to the regional committee may allow time for return to the agency staff with suggestions and comments on the records submitted and some further selectivity on the basis of specific sections of records which seem worth submitting when an entire record may not meet the criteria. We hope, too, that such greater participation will reduce the work of the regional committees in the selection of records for through such participation the agency will be submitting records more likely to meet the qualitative criteria.

In announcing the exhibit last year we had stated that:—

The demand has come from all quarters that the criteria for the exhibit should have a more qualitative emphasis. Instead of establishing record "eligibility" on the basis of current practice, which rightly needed to come first, we should now select records on the basis of good case work practice as we know it today.

This new committee is reviewing the experience of the past year and Miss Pitts will be writing about this at a later date.

You will be hearing from your regional chairman listed below. But do not hesitate to write her if by chance you do not receive word from her.

National Chairman

MISS MARJORIE W. PITTS, District Secretary
Connecticut Children's Aid Society
Rear 228 Main Street
Danbury, Connecticut

1. ALABAMA, FLORIDA, GEORGIA, LOUISIANA
MISS FRANCES DAVIS
Division of Child Welfare
State Welfare Board
Jacksonville 1, Florida
2. INDIANA, MICHIGAN
MISS SIBYL LEACH
Michigan Children's Institute
1447 Washington Heights
Ann Arbor, Michigan
3. MARYLAND, WASHINGTON, D. C., VIRGINIA
MISS RUTH WEXLER
Children's Division
Department of Public Welfare
327 St. Paul Place
Baltimore 17, Maryland
4. MAINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE, VERMONT, MASSACHUSETTS, RHODE ISLAND, CONNECTICUT
MISS ELLERY RUSSEL
Children's Service Bureau
187 Middle Street
Portland 3, Maine
5. ILLINOIS, MISSOURI
MISS MARY A. CAVEN
Peoria Child and Family Service, Inc.
318 Third Avenue
Peoria 6, Illinois
6. COLORADO, KANSAS, NEBRASKA, NORTH DAKOTA, OKLAHOMA, TEXAS
MISS MOSS TYLER
DePelchin Faith Home and Children's Bureau
100 Sandman Street
Houston 7, Texas
7. GREATER NEW YORK, WESTCHESTER, NEW JERSEY
MISS MAISIE BECKER
Jewish Board of Guardians
228 East 19th Street
New York 3, New York
8. ALBANY, SYRACUSE, BUFFALO, ELMIRA, NIAGARA FALLS, ROCHESTER
MISS FRANCES BELLANCA
Children's Aid Society and S.P.C.C.
70 West Chippewa Street
Buffalo 2, New York
9. OHIO, KENTUCKY
MISS MARY T. YOWELL
Allen County Child Welfare Association, Inc.
707 Citizens Building
Lima, Ohio
10. DELAWARE, PENNSYLVANIA
MISS ELIZABETH E. SLOAN
The Children's Bureau of Delaware
1310 Delaware Avenue
Wilmington 16, Delaware
11. NORTH CAROLINA, SOUTH CAROLINA, TENNESSEE
MISS EDWINA FORD
Children's Bureau, Inc.
312 Falls Building
Memphis 3, Tennessee
12. CALIFORNIA, HAWAII
MISS MARJORIE WILKES
Children's Home Society of California
3100 West Adams Boulevard
Los Angeles 16, California
13. WASHINGTON, OREGON
MISS CAROLYN DOOLITTLE
Division for Children
Department of Social Security
Olympia, Washington
14. IOWA, MINNESOTA, WISCONSIN
MISS LUCILE QUINLAN
County Welfare Merit System
Globe Building
St. Paul 1, Minnesota

H. L. G.

Board Member Column

RELATIONSHIP OF BOARD AND STAFF

An era of partnership between the board of trustees and the professional staff has emerged. To get a clear picture of the function and duties of a present-day agency board, let us take a look at its development in the past twenty years. We might say that this has been in exact ratio with the progress of social planning itself. Back in the twenties, lay boards were largely concerned with finance. Therefore, the choice of members was greatly influenced by their ability to give or to influence others to produce enough money to support the agency. There was very little actual participation except at Thanksgiving and Christmas when most philanthropic citizens busied themselves to distribute baskets to the poor. In other words, things were done for people instead of with them.

As the philosophy of giving and the channels of public and private endeavor became more clearly defined, so also did the function of a lay board. It gradually became apparent that a community would accept the changing social trends only as fast as it understood them and could go along with them. Social workers were looked on with a bit of trepidation and suspicion. They, in turn, viewed lay people as lesser beings who did not speak the language and whose part in the agency work went only as far as their pocketbooks.

This sounds like a gloomy picture of the late twenties and early thirties, but those of you who remember those days know it is not as black as the conditions themselves! Gradually, as the deluge of enormous relief loads were worked into the groove of public supported bureaus, private agencies began to take stock of themselves. They studied their area of endeavor and began to realize that if they were to fill the tremendous need for services necessarily left untouched by the overcrowded, overworked public agencies, they must accept the lay person for something besides a moneybag.

Lay boards have been set up on a new basis. Increasingly they are made up of interested people with the potential capacity to represent a cross section of the thinking in the community and at the same time to take back to their community an understanding of the work of the agency.

At the present stage of development, it seems to me that the first responsibility of a lay board is to define the function of the agency and to determine its policies. From my experience as a board member, I know that this does not just happen. It is only possible when the chairman of the board and the

executive of the agency create opportunities for mutual planning and participation between board and staff. Staff members bring to the board members their technical skill and their knowledge of a particular problem. The board discusses the problem further in the light of its broad community background. Only through this process, growing out of the important and different contributions of board and staff, can the board determine responsibly the agency's function and policies. Sound decisions of the board are, in this way, dependent upon the ability and vision of both board and staff in their own particular spheres. Beyond that, they are also dependent upon the mutual respect of board and staff and upon the clear recognition by each of the valuable and essential contribution of the other. I should not want to have to decide whether a certain family should receive help with clothing nor whether a certain child should be placed in a certain home. But I would have much to say, and feel that I could be helpful, if the problem arose as to whether our agency should help all families asking for clothing, or all children needing placement.

The board has a definite responsibility in determining the personnel policies of the agency. A personnel committee, appointed from the board and working with the executive, decides upon the personnel practices after giving the staff ample opportunity to express their own opinions. The board committee is also, it seems to me, the go-between for the executive to the board in hiring and releasing staff members. The executive submits to this committee the qualifications and evaluation of a prospective staff member. If the committee accepts this report, it will in turn recommend to the board that favorable action be taken. In this way, we of the board have a stake in a new staff member and have shared with the executive the burden of selection or rejection. Here, again, the executive can present the professional knowledge about an applicant while we can consider him from an agency-community vantage point. The ultimate responsibility is ours, after we have made full use of the executive's professional help.

Although I know that professional social workers must do a great deal of interpretation and publicity in the community, especially in these days of few foster homes, I feel that one of the major jobs of board members is in interpretation. Such a job precludes our knowledge, as laymen, of the agency and its work. We can interpret the agency to the community and we can interpret the community to the staff. Staff members come and go. Board members, even with their limited term of membership, can

form a continuing body which holds steady for the clients, agency, community and staff. It is the lot and the privilege of the lay person, living in the city and interested in the building of a better city, to furnish the understanding and continuity of and for the agency. I may go off the board in two years time. But there are other board members with a similar interest in the agency, and with roots in the community as deep as mine, who will continue. Continuity, as supplied by a board of directors, is essential to an agency and it also implies flexibility on the part of board and staff—a readiness to grow and to change.

It seems to me that the more responsibility which is put upon board members, the more interest and value is received from them. Many an idea has been planted in a board member's mind by a smart executive and has come out eagerly as his own. The lay and the professional contributions are distinct. In order to have a successful agency, the functions of the board and of the staff must be clearly defined. And board and staff must have full respect, each for the other.

—MRS. LINVILLE K. MARTIN,

*Member, Board of Directors, Family and Child Service Agency,
Winston-Salem, N. C.*

READER'S FORUM

SERVICES UNDER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AUSPICES

DEAR EDITOR:

I am writing to inform you of a matter which concerns the future development of our agency, and to ask for advice. A change has recently taken place in the Department of Social Welfare which promises to bring about various other changes in the future. The former executive of the Child Welfare Division has gone. In her place there is to be a person formerly connected with the department and highly regarded. My information is that the department will be reorganized so as to cover the state more completely with competent consultants and district workers, developing in the counties boarding home services which have not been developed heretofore.

This will not be easy, nor can it be done overnight, because personnel is so scarce and because it is not easy to set up units of boarding homes by the best of agencies. Yet with sufficient funds available and competent executives able to work with their associates, it can be done. I realize that our agency has done things and rendered services which normally will belong to the public department. I foresee there-

fore that our agency must expect to give up and modify parts of its present program in the course of two or three or four years. So I have already approached one of the head men in the public department and declared myself on certain matters. I have said that I expect some such changes as I have indicated above; an opinion in which he concurred. I have said, too, that I shall appreciate the courtesy if from time to time representatives of that department and of our agency can meet in conference for a frank discussion of present and future policies. We expect to make it our principal purpose to do the things which are needed, to supplement the services which the public agencies give, and thus do its rightful part in the whole complex child welfare program of our community. This representative of the public department agreed cordially with me on this proposition.

Naturally he was glad to find that I could see eye to eye with him on the matter of the Public Department's assuming a larger program of work in the future. This trend is inevitable in the future, I presume, and probably will be true in many states.

Now it remains for me and my associates to see ahead and find for our agency worthwhile services which we should gradually attempt as our present and past program becomes unnecessary for a private agency. Undoubtedly you have found similar situations elsewhere.

REPLY

Your plan to meet periodically with representatives of the department of public welfare for frank discussion of policies and for a decision as to division of responsibility is the soundest way on which a public and private agency can plan together how to meet social welfare needs in any community.

It is generally accepted that a county public welfare program is responsible for the care of all children who need such care. When there is also service under private auspices, it becomes necessary to define the respective functions of each in order to make sure that they complement and strengthen each other. As in the field of public assistance, so in the child welfare field, to date the principle on which such definition of function has been based is that long-time or "maintenance" help is the responsibility of the public agency while the private agency carries responsibility for short-time care, for specialized care, for services which have not yet been accepted and recognized and therefore are in the field where experimentation and study are vital; so, for example, in some communities the long-time care of children—

the recognized responsibility of the public agency, must be complemented by the private agency giving care to children whose family situation is likely to change or can respond to short-time case work service so that the child can be helped to return to its own home normally.

The definition of short-time care varies in different communities. For example, one community tells us that from a few days up to nine months is short-time care. Others put the time limit as a year, while others define their function in terms of type of problem and therefore type of service needed, so if a situation demanded a good deal of case work and psychiatric help, the private agency would assume such responsibility. Such a case might eventually become one for long-time care in which event the case could be transferred to public auspices.

Another basis for the differentiation between private and public care is where there is a desire for care under religious auspices where certain sectarian groups want to continue to give children of their faith care under their own auspices. In some situations the arrangement, as you probably know, is that when the case is frankly one which is accepted as a community or public responsibility, the private religious or other group may be reimbursed for a part of the expense of the care.

In the absence of any more clearly defined basis of differentiation of public and private services, it therefore seems wise that each community, while bearing the principle just stated in mind, keep periodically examining the services available, the facilities which either the public or the private agency could use, and determining their different responsibility in such a way as would insure the wide variety of services which a community needs if it is to serve the wide variety of needs of children. For instance, the private agency can continue to serve in cases in which placement is needed because of certain problems in child-parent relationship which given adequate case work service could be resolved within a relatively short period, and in adoption service because it is short-time service of a highly specialized nature for a child.

You might also make inquiry into services which by statute would be excluded for the public agency, as for example, service to non-residents. In other words, inasmuch as private agencies enter the field of social welfare to insure that children who need care shall not suffer, and to help develop and improve standards of service on the basis of developing knowledge and developing social conscience, they can continue to strengthen social services by developing

needed services, and by supplementing services available under public auspices. We are such a long way from really adequately meeting the needs of children that we can only welcome the public agency taking over some responsibility so that private agencies can be freed to give more intensive and specialized help where the need has not yet been generally established and met.

In a discussion of peacetime responsibilities of voluntary agencies, Miss Dorothy C. Kahn* lists some of the mutual responsibilities of voluntary and governmental agencies. Included are the following:

1. Voluntary social work cannot, should not, and in fact never has carried responsibility for basic security.

2. *Coverage* is an indispensable requirement of government just as *selection* is of voluntary effort. But voluntary effort must use its influence to insure coverage by government just as government must require that the selection of fields of voluntary effort shall be based on demonstrated capacity for the public service it proposes to render and for maintaining the quality of that service.

3. Service to individuals as contrasted with the meeting of mass need in a standardized way is no longer a satisfactory basis for distinction between auspices. Government is today using the most refined skills of case work; for instance, in its expanding service to individuals. And certain services to and by large groups of people are wholly voluntary and could not be otherwise.

4. Voluntary auspices are not a competitor with government nor are voluntary activities merely contingent or supplemental. They are either appropriate as enterprises which the whole people do not yet see as proper for governmental auspices and some people *wish* to support, or they are essential because a democratic government cannot perform all functions itself and requires for its own preservation a voice and an effort beyond the widest interpretation of legal sanctions and controls. The more voluntary social work succeeds in transferring its acquired knowledge, skill and method to governmental auspices the greater becomes its opportunity to move into new fields of unmet social need or to deepen and extend knowledge and increase skill.

—ED.

N.B.—*The Reader's Forum invites further comments and discussion.*

* *Where Do We Go From Here?* by Dorothy C. Kahn, BETTER TIMES, November 2, 1945.

Directory Changes

The name of The Cleveland Humane Society, 1001 Huron Road, Cleveland 15, Ohio, has been changed to Children's Services.

The Children's Protective Society of Minneapolis has merged and is now the Family and Children's Services, 404 South Eighth Street, Minneapolis 2, Minnesota. Clark W. Blackburn is Executive Secretary.

Adoption Procedure

STATE departments and agencies engaged in child adoption will welcome the evaluation and interpretation of "The Responsibility of a State Department of Public Welfare in Adoption" which appears in the September, 1945, issue of *The Social Service Review*. Mary Ruth Colby clarifies a number of the questions that had arisen in the minds of both private adoption agencies and state department officials with regard to some recommendations in "Essentials of Adoption Law and Procedures" released by the United States Children's Bureau. There had been some misunderstanding as to what was implied in the "Investigation and report by State Welfare Department in each case of adoption." The questions ran like this one:

It seemed to us that this recommendation was impractical in a large state. It seemed to us to be much more desirable for the adoption law to provide that the investigation in adoption cases should be made by agencies certified by the state department as equipped to make that kind of a study.

The Essentials of Adoption Law and Procedures suggest that:

... they do provide that the study might be made by child welfare agencies acting as agencies of the department but that the report should be prepared by the state welfare department. This does not seem to us to be practical.

And then, the question was raised about whether it is possible that:

... the state department should be made a party to every action for adoption of a minor.

In this article, under the caption "The State Department and Agency Adoptions," Miss Colby explains that

As a general rule, a state department need not assume any direct responsibility for adoptions of children placed by agencies. However, it is most important that, from the beginning of a state adoption program, a wise plan be developed through joint action of the state department and the several child-placing agencies so that each may clearly understand what is to be expected of the other.

The state department will also find it important to determine the standards by which the child-placing agencies may be evaluated; only such agencies as have an adequate and qualified staff to make the necessary study of the child and the home prior to placement and to give satisfactory supervision following placement should be authorized to place children in adoptive homes.

* * *

Any plans set up should be carefully worked out to indicate clearly the procedure to be followed by the child-placing agencies for reporting both the placement of children and the supervision given them, as well as the division of responsibility between the

child-placing agencies and the department at the time of a child's adoption.

It has been generally accepted that a child-placing agency should take the major responsibility for the adoption of those children it has placed; but it has been suggested that, until such time as a uniform plan can be developed for the reports of the agencies to the courts, such reports should properly be the joint responsibility of the placing agency and the state department, with the state department drafting the report from the information submitted to it by the placing agency. Such a plan would make possible uniformity in both the form and the content of all reports.

* * *

With the lessening of the competition that formerly existed between state departments and the private child-placing agencies and with the improved quality of professional service in both public and private agencies, there would seem to be little justification for having the state department carry a burden that logically belongs to the child-placing agencies.

After suggesting that the state department make consultation service available the report continues:

A close relationship will need to be maintained between the state department and each child-placing agency. The placing agency should not agree to final adoption plans for any child for whom it has direct responsibility until the placement has been approved by the state department.

With reference to independent placement, which is recognized as a large problem, the report states:

The social study of such adoptions will be the responsibility of the state department . . . these will need to be evaluated and interpreted for the court so that it may have the advantage of a fair and complete picture of each individual situation as a basis for its decision.

This article clarifies and amplifies so much that needed clarification, it should be read carefully by those interested in improving adoption practice.

On Appointing a Committee

Now that social work has gone into the business of telling its community what it can be expected to do, public relations committees are being appointed all over the land. In an article in the October-November, 1945, issue of *Channels** entitled, "But Let George Do It Right" Mr. Leopold Lippman tells aboutt he dos and don'ts of appointing such a committee so as to insure effective functioning. The six principles which Mr. Lippman enunciated are here quoted because they offer such sound guidance in appointing any committee under any auspices for any purposes. The principles are:

1. The chairman of the committee can make or

* Publication of National Publicity Council

break it . . . the most important single factor in the success or failure of (such) a committee is the person who heads it. . . . The principal requirements are: native intelligence and imagination, enthusiasm for the agency and for the task, and availability.

2. A committee without a well-defined purpose is like a bus without a route. . . . Even before the committee is appointed, the agency executive, the board . . . should define the fundamental responsibility and direction it is to take. A well-selected chairman can help work out the scope of the committee. . . . The breadth of the committee's assignment must affect the selection of its membership.

3. The committee is no better than its members . . . beware of anyone suggested for the committee "because there is no place else to put him."

4. If ever a left hand needed to know what the right hand was doing, it's in the relations among board, staff and publicity committee. What agency committee does not need to know about the agency policies and practices operating in relation to its special assignment.

5. The committee which bites off more than it can chew will get indigestion. . . . It is better to start small and work your way up than to start big and bog down.

6. Too meticulous supervision can quench a committee's enthusiasm. Close relations with the staff and board ought to keep the committee in touch with reality . . . but quibbling over commas is undesirable.

This very readable article in its entirety is a "Don't-Miss-It."

Announcement Regarding Case Record Exhibit

IN RESPONSE to an overwhelming request, we are now preparing to make the 1945 case record exhibit available not only *in toto* but in sections each dealing with one of the aspects of child welfare. In the future, sections of the exhibit dealing with Adoptions, Day Care, Foster Family Care, Institutional Care, Protective Services and Services to Unmarried Mothers, will be available on loan individually or in groups, in addition to the entire exhibit dealing with all these aspects. The exhibit or sections thereof continues to be available on request to member agencies free of charge, except for expressage, and to affiliates and associates at a fee of \$5.00 per week, plus express.

BOOK NOTES

THE STORY OF THE SPRINGFIELD PLAN: ONE COMMUNITY'S TOTAL WAR AGAINST PREJUDICE. By Clarence I. Chatto and Alice L. Halligan, Barnes & Noble, N. Y. 1945. 201 pp. \$2.75.

"The Story of the Springfield Plan—One Community's Total War Against Prejudice" is a readable account of the methods by which the schools in Springfield, Massachusetts, are trying to carry out the task of educating children for citizenship in a democracy. Most American schools, we believe, recognize their responsibility to do just that but few school systems have organized their administration and focused their curriculum, their classroom procedures, their subject matter used, materials developed, class projects undertaken, and community relationships established so specifically and directly on that objective.

This is a story of how the Springfield schools seek to realize this objective through experience given the children of different races, nationalities and creeds, in learning, working, thinking together in a wholesome, natural relationship, thus giving each child a respect for the inherent dignity and worth that are the birthright of all persons in a democracy. Children learn to think in terms of the responsibilities and privileges of American citizenship by sharing in responsibility for the welfare of the class and the school, and by participating in community service. Different schools and different grades, through the cooperation of supervisors, principals, teachers and children, develop their own methods of providing such experience and of developing such thinking, but the theme of the American ideals of religious, political, economic and social democracy runs through all of the grades from kindergarten through high school and into such extra-classroom activities as school and inter-school councils, school clubs, "town halls," placement bureaus, PTA, and adult education programs. The authors have given us a detailed picture, with a wealth of illustrative material, of some of the procedures by which children of different races, nationalities and backgrounds are associated in common enterprises that bring to them understanding of one another through the experience of working and thinking together. It is a book that holds concrete and practical suggestions for teachers but for social workers, parents, and American citizens in general it offers also an inspiration and a challenge. Surely never in our history has there been more need for the ideals of liberty, equality, justice and brotherhood of man, that are so big a part of the American creed, to be put into practice as the basis of our relationships with each other! Our schools cannot do the whole job.

Racial prejudice, for instance, cannot be wholly wiped out by a change in educational methods. Its causes lie too deep in our cultural pattern; its expression is stimulated by too many factors in our national economy and social structure. But nothing in this "brave, new, postwar world" is more urgent than that we try to find and eliminate the *sources* of prejudice in human beings living together in a democracy. Child training through the schools is not the only point of attack on the illiberal ideas and irresponsible citizenship that will defeat democracy if not themselves defeated, but it is an important one.

"The Springfield program, like the American democratic way, is seen as unfinished business," to quote the authors of this book, but Springfield has made a courageous and challenging beginning on the task that all of us face.

—JEAN L. BENSON,

*Secretary, Family and Child Welfare Division
Council of Social Agencies, New Orleans, La.*

SELF-GOVERNMENT IN A CHILDREN'S INSTITUTION: ITS PHILOSOPHY, STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION. By Lorene Putsch. Pamphlet, 18 pp. Child Welfare League of America, July, 1945. Price 25 cents.

This pamphlet summarizes analytically seven years experience with self-government by a group of thirty-five children in an institution.

Many of the common problems of group care of children are listed and the contribution of self-government to the elimination or simplification of many of these problems is described. Such tendencies in groups as the decreasing influence of adult approval or disapproval on a child's behavior; the exaggerated importance of group approval; the irresponsibility fostered by group living and the excessive disturbances and lack of any sense of ownership, all seem to have been constructively modified through the children's participation in the councils of the institution. The structure of their councils is outlined as to representation, tenure of office, frequency of meetings and the reporting back to the group of council actions. The section on the Role of the Council and Rule Making presents clearly and concisely the philosophy of self-government, its purposes, advantages and limitations.

Many misconceptions generally held have often worked to the detriment of effective self-government in an institution. "A group of children who happen to be living under one roof are no more capable of taking care of themselves than is any individual child." The term "self-government" is truly a misnomer because it implies complete self and group control and guidance, whereas there are many areas

in the child's life where the child, because of immaturity and lack of knowledge and experience, is totally incapable of deciding wisely what is best. Such limitations must be recognized and the area in which self-government can function be clearly defined, and the complete control in certain other areas must be left to the Board and Staff.

Having determined in what area the children are capable of governing themselves, then the term self-government will become a farce unless some real power is delegated to the council. These various areas are discussed and the alignment of responsibility between the Board, the Staff and the Council is set forth.

In general the council has the responsibility of working out the detailed problems arising from children's day-by-day living together, and has unrestricted power in the protection of the individual rights against violation by the group or the protection of the group's rights against violation by the individual.

Just as the staff is restricted from establishing any procedure that is in conflict with general agency policy, so the council has no responsibility for setting up for the children the kind of regulations necessary for their safety, health or education.

In summarizing, certain conclusions are drawn:

1. The council provides a common meeting ground for children and staff.
2. As a safety valve it has a steadying effect upon the group.
3. Relieves pent-up feelings.
4. Offers a medium through which regulations are interpreted to the children.
5. Adds to the children's sense of security and teaches the fundamental democratic principle that only through restriction is real freedom possible.

—FREDERICK G. BEHREND, *Director,
Greer School, Hope Farm, Dutchess County, New York*

BIBLIOGRAPHY ON GROUP WORK, By The American Association for the Study of Group Work, Association Press, 347 Madison Avenue, New York 17. 25 cents.

This new and comprehensive bibliography was prepared by Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland at the request of the American Association for the Study of Group Work. While most of the 420 references in this listing are dated within the past decade, older books and articles of lasting value are included. It is a remarkably fine job. The bibliography is conveniently organized. The major divisions cover "The Practice of Group Work and Background Material Relating to the Insights of the Group Worker."